421 the loan but something in addition, and he will always show
596 his gratitude for it. If the repayment drags on and on, as
614 usually happens, the community does not withdraw his right to the debt, which is never lost; it watches for a turn for the better in the debtor's affairs, meddles in his business, and plagues his widows and children for all it can get from them after his death. The rapacity of the community uses the old debt as an excuse for seizing everything left by the debtor.

466 Every member of the community, strictly speaking, is
596 at the service of the community and must therefore cooperate
614 to assure its prosperity. If he cannot work himself, or does not wish to, in the fields, for instance, he must provide a substitute in the person of one of his children or his own slaves. To the extent that he cannot find the means to exempt himself, [186] he is treated as one of the "poor" and is forced to work.

166 It is easy to understand that the young men often leave to make their fortunes elsewhere in order to escape a power that is so suspicious, troublesome and all-pervading. Some of them never return, either because they have managed to create an independent life for themselves, or because they are more comfortable at a safe distance from their authoritarian elders. More often, however, the young man, having founded an independent family far away, keeps in close touch with his community and watches developments there in case he may one day be able to profit from them.

578 The young men who stay at home form a party of intrigue
561 which is forever at war with the fa and the senate. Their op-
885 position weakens, however, as they approach the age at which they too will participate in the faya to which they aspire. Gradually, as one changes from kamalen' to bina, he acquires the same niggling authoritarianism which then arouses the animosity of the new kamalen'-u.

562 In concluding this study of the members of the commun-
● 583 ity, the situation of girls remains to be discussed. Like the boys, they belong completely to the community, which, as a result, has the right to make as much profit out of them as possible. So, since exogamy is the rule, the community cedes the girl in usufruct to whoever pays the bride price, and because she will

562 inevitably leave the community, she can never claim any
583 authority. Thus condemned to perpetual powerlessness, a woman never has the right to any position other than an inferior one in native society. Motives based on interest or affection may modify her situation more or less to her advantage, but they will not change her basic rights, which are at the root of all disputes about women, between spouses or between communities.

II. The Community of Property

421 What is the property of which the patrimony is composed?

It is impossible to provide a detailed list, which would, in any case, he endless. Nor should we limit ourselves to the definitions of our legal system, which are too narrow. From the native point of view, patrimonial property [187] may be divided into three principal categories.

[776] First, there are the gods; the manes, or souls of the ancestral protectors of the family; and the nyana, the gods created by the magician. Some of them protect only the community, while others are also concerned with other collectivities. Finally, there are the innumerable magic weapons, which are gods of a sort. In the discussion of the duties of the fa, I spoke of these gods, and they are also mentioned in other parts of this work.

421 A second category of property is made up of the reciprocal rights of the community and its members, on the one hand,
424 and of the community and similar collectivities, on the other. I have just explained the first, and the second will be dealt with later in the chapter under the heading "Relations between Communities."

421 Finally, all the things that are particularly valued make
422 up the third category: gold; cattle and sheep; grain; agricul-
423 tural, industrial, and commercial products of all kinds; dwellings; etc. Three points related to this last category require special consideration: agrarian usufruct, conjugal usufruct, and slaves.

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The patriarchal community draws its subsistence from this agricultural exploitation, and as a result, a kind of work organization has developed. Patriarchal communities or important families have agricultural land in various regions and these tracts are often far apart. Some members of the community or a group of slaves are therefore settled in each domain, sometimes on a permanent basis, sometimes for the period of clearing and cultivating the soil, sometimes for the period of harvest.

Theoretically, every member of the community and every slave must work for the community from dawn to around noon every day during the farming season. Two days, however, Monday and Thursday, are given to these persons for work in their own fields. Anyone who cannot or will not work has the right to provide a replacement from among his dependents.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these rules. In the first place, everyone works according to his position. Among the poor, the master works as hard as the slave, if not harder; among people in comfortable circumstances, the master merely controls and directs the work, sometimes reserving a particular job for himself. In important communities, field work [189] is almost exclusively the duty of the slaves, under the surveillance of their leaders and following the orders of the fa, who either supervises it himself or has a member of his entourage do so.

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Conjugal usufruct. When she marries, a woman is given in usufruct in exchange for the bride price. This usufruct is community property exactly like the things used for the bride price.

When a fa dies, the disposal of the conjugal usufruct included in the estate is a serious matter. Since the conjugal usufruct is of the same duration as the life of the woman, the death of the husband has no legal effect on the situation of his spouse. Since it is understood, however, that the widow has no sexual obligations to her husband's heirs, the usufruct is reduced in that respect. Such is the lot of widows when the heirs decide to keep them without marrying them and the women elect to remain.

583 Most often, however, the heirs either marry the widows
589 or send them home, or the women leave of their own volition.
768 An heir who marries a widow of the deceased must take
[587] her back to her family, obtain their consent, and pay them a new bride price, required because a new usufruct is involved. The chronicle of Ségou shows us how this custom operates. Upon the death of Dina Wara, his son escorted to Ségou his father's widow, Biton's sister, whom he wanted to marry. He made sumptuous gifts in order to obtain consent.

In the case of a widow who is sent home or who leaves of her own accord, responsibility for the bride price already paid rests with the party who broke the contract, i.e., with the person who sent the widow away or, if she left of her own accord, with her family. The question of responsibility for the bride price is an important one, since usually neither party has either the means or the desire to make it up. As a result, every effort is made to evade payment, and it is common practice to resort to the most shameless bargaining of the woman involved. A husband is sought who will agree to pay the bride price asked by the one having rights over her, but most often, partial payment will be made when the woman is returned, the creditor's impatience is calmed by gifts, and the balance of the bride price remains wholly or partly unpaid [190] at the time of the debtor's death. This obviously results in insolvable complications during and after the marriage (1).

1. Concerning the lot of widows, see the discussions about the widows of Biton and Ngolo in the chronicle of Ségou.

567 Slaves. Enslavement comes about in many ways, but the
727 three principal ones are force, birth, and the result of obligations.

Force has perhaps been the primary cause of enslavement. A person who surrenders is the chattel of the conqueror, but the treatment given him varies in accordance with his previous situation. Was he a man of position? If he is violent, he is killed or sold; if it is thought that his relatives will pay a high ransom, he is kept. If he is clever enough to arouse sympathy, he often is

584 is unfavorable, that is by no means the end of the matter, for both ancestors and gods usually allow themselves to be persuaded, for a price. When the reply is, or becomes, favorable, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi gives customary presents to the fa and to the girl's family. Henceforth, the two communities, that of the young man and that of the girl, are united by a bond that can be broken only for the gravest reasons, and even then a rupture will usually give rise to serious disagreements.

583 It is at this point that the parties agree, not without much argument and bargaining, on the amount, type, and mode of payment of the bride price and the date on which the girl will be handed over.

Between the time of the agreement and the release of the woman, there is a period which is often very long and in some cases several years. This interval is used by the girl's mother to prepare the things she will give her daughter (clothing, household utensils, etc.). [198] The fiancé, meanwhile, needs the time to accumulate what he has promised to pay when the girl is given to him.

584 602 From this moment on, the relations between the two communities are very strictly governed. Native etiquette forbids the fiancée henceforth to meet or to take meals with her future brother-in-law unless a third party is present. The same applies to the young man and his future mother-in-law. The fiancé must constantly show that he takes an interest in anything that concerns his future affinal family. He must attend funerals and festivals or at least send a material contribution consistent with his wealth and social standing. When field work is in progress, it is customary for the fiancé's fula-ni to appear in a body and ceremoniously share the work. This demonstration of solidarity is mostly more noisy than helpful; the work is wholly simulated, but the proceedings always end in dancing and copious drinking.

583 184 Bride price (1) and gifts. The woman is not turned over

1. In certain regions (Bougouni, Sikasso, Koutiala, San) there is no regularly constituted bride price; the bridegroom's

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family gives the bride's family a young girl to replace the one taken away.

until all or a portion of the agreed bride price has been paid and especially not before the customary gifts have been received.

The nature and value of the bride price and gifts vary since they depend on the wealth of the future husband, the rank of the woman and family customs. Among the poor, the bride price is small: a few handfuls of cowries, a chicken, a few
[435] kola nuts, a few lengths of native cotton. An average bride price is worth, in all, 25,000 to 30,000 cowries (about 25 to 30 francs). Among the rich, the bride price may include one or more slaves, gold jewelry, silver, fabrics, clothing, etc.

The same is true of the gifts; everything depends on the families involved. It is customary around Ségou, however, for the fiancé to give his bride a large piece of native material called kundugu fini, a dioké (a kind of blouse), and a pair of sandals with very thick soles. He must also, if he can afford to, give her a slave to do the kitchen work, a cow, jewelry, etc. [199]

He must also give presents to the girl's parents in accordance with his means.

The totality of the bride price and gifts is called furu-fen', literally, "the property of the marriage." As soon as part of this furu-fen' is handed over to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi, he takes it,
[273] escorted by some of the fiancé's friends, to the girl's fa. All of these proceedings, of course, involve jugs of native beer (dlo). The notables of the place, the dugu-tigi, the "elders," and even the kamalen', come at once to congratulate the family, to share in the drinking, and to receive a share of the furu-fen'.

The fiancée is often a little girl, and in that case the duties of the young man and his family go on for several years. The giving of gifts is repeated, to an extent commensurate with the young man's wealth and the standing of the girl's family.
431 At the time of harvest it is customary for the fiancé to send one
583 or more baskets of millet, each weighing 20 to 40 kilos, and from time to time, a jug of beer, 20 to 30 liters. On the

583 occasion of funerals or religious ceremonies, he brings offerings
431 (fowl, kola nuts, millet, salt, etc.). The ceremony at which his contribution is indispensable is the da woro (1). On this

1. See p. 264 below.

occasion the furu-bolo-ma-tigi is entrusted with important gifts for the girl (clothing and jewelry) as well as for the relatives assembled (food of all kinds).

583 Just as the amount and nature of the furu-fen' vary, the manner of payment and the time set for the payment of the bride price are likewise left to the discretion of the parties. There may be a single payment or there may be installments, either before or partly before and partly after the bride is handed over. From the material point of view, the persons of the bride and groom are actually of no importance. The fa who gives the bride price wants a girl from the family with which he wishes an alliance, and all that matters is that the girl be marriageable at the date agreed upon, provided that she is handed over in accordance with the agreement. In the same connection, the person giving the bride price is not required to have the whole amount needed at the time of [200] the agreement; it is sufficient that he be in a position to pay when the amount falls due. This explains certain usages which might otherwise seem odd.

[584] It often happens that a fa arranging a marriage speaks for a very young girl or even for one not yet born. If the child is handed over before nubility, the marriage is not consummated until after the first menses. We have mentioned above that in such cases the marriage payment involves repeated gifts for years.

583 Another very curious method of paying the bride price
231 is to follow a custom called "the mare's foot." Its essential features are as follows.

A person giving bride price has a mare that he could sell to pay off the obligation, but he prefers to promise one or more of the foals or, as the natives say, one or more of "feet." This method of turning a brood mare to account without selling it is common among the natives of western Sudan.

583 231 If the payer has promised "a foot," he turns the mare over to the recipient, who will have to feed it and breed it. The latter keeps the foal and returns the mare after the foal is weaned; the risk is his, unless a major catastrophe occurs, and he must prove that such was the case.

If two "feet" are called for, the mare is as it were, jointly owned, each person alternately taking care of the animal and exploiting it for an agreed period. The first foal is jointly held, and after it is weaned, the contracting parties equalize the costs by alternately caring for the mare and the foal. This continues until three foals have been born and weaned. Then the mare and one of the foals goes into one share and the other two foals in another; the share allotted to each party is determined by drawing lots.

When he has completed the payment of "feet," the payer can obtain the woman without having paid any of the bride price since her family has the mare as security.

584 It may happen that one or the other of the fiancés dies. In principle, it is well to bear in mind the material standpoint involved: persons are secondary in concluding the affair; the two fa look out for their respective interests while finding a solution to the difficulties that [201] arise during the period of betrothal, often a very long one. The dead fiancé is not uncommonly replaced by one of his brothers (1), and the girl by one of

1. More commonly by one of the sons of the fiancé's community.

her sisters (2); nothing changes in either case. If the fiancé or

2. More commonly by one of the daughters of the fiancée's community.

fiancée cannot be replaced in this way, the disposition of the furu-fen' already received by the girl's family is decided by agreement between the parties. Sometimes the proceeds are divided, with half going to each community; at other times they may be returned to the groom's family, or conversely, they may be left with the bride's family.

584 Though disrupted marriage arrangements are rare, this may happen through a variety of causes and is settled by agreement or, in case of conflict, by arbitrators.

585 Delivery of the bride. Because this act involves a change of status for the parties concerned, it requires the ritual practices of a magical character of which we saw an example in connection with the funeral of a fa. Their purpose is to make sure that change takes place without harm to anyone.

When the payer has fulfilled his obligations and behaved according to custom, the girl must be given to him on the date agreed upon. On that day, the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and the fiancé's friends, accompanied by musicians, appear at the home of the girl's parents to receive and lead away the bride. The parents agree, but the girl has disappeared. The newcomers start at once to look for her, but she cannot be found because her relatives and friends help her to hide. The hunt arouses both sides and leads to brawls; as the excitement reaches its height, the girl is found. Only the intervention of the dugu-tigi himself can put an end to the conflict. He gives his permission to the furu-bolo-ma-tigi to take the girl away and advises her to follow.

Then the furu-bolo-ma-tigi and his companions, acting as an escort, [202] take the girl toward the exit from the village. Just as she is about to leave the enclosure, however, she refuses to go a step farther, and the young men pretend to do violence to her in order to force her to accompany them in spite of her cries. She fights and screams until she is beyond the limits of the village territory. Then she suddenly becomes calm, wraps herself in the large piece of cloth given by her fiancé, and gaily follows her companions, who carry her furu-fen' and have by now joined the group of the furu-bolo-ma-tigi. The troop of young men bring up the rear and make a great racket with drums and trumpets and from time to time give the traditional [583] marriage cry: "kuyo! kuyo! (1)."

1. This simulated abduction must be interpreted as a separation rite.

588 Free union. This type of union rests on simple consent
583 by the two parties without any bride price.

In principle a woman who has ceased to belong to a husband belongs to her original community, and she can make no decisions concerning her future without its consent. If she ignores this, the community can always intervene to force her to break off any engagement she may have made, and to this end it may use any means of absolute control.

This suffices to explain why a man who agrees to a union of this kind usually finds himself in the most serious difficulties. Not only can his wife and children be taken from him without [672] redress, but he can be sued for damages by the community to which the woman belongs.

It does sometimes happen, however, that certain women are released from the authority of their communities. These include women who are sole survivors of a community and, more commonly, those who have bought their freedom by dubious means. A free man who lives with such women achieves a union that to a great extent has the same effect as marriage. [206]

The Family

592 The household. The lawful household is based on mar-
583 riage. In order to grasp its essence, account must be taken of the interplay of two elements which are perfectly distinct but always closely involved in all human affairs: interest and sentiment. In a lawful household the essential interest is the bride price whose nature must be defined in order to understand its overwhelming importance.

583 Bride price is what is paid in exchange for a wife. It is understood that the status of the woman thus handed over does not change; if she was free before the event, she is still free after the payment of the bride price.

586 The marriage tie is such that it can always be broken by one or the other party; the one breaking the contract simply loses the bride price in the sense that if the husband initiated the rupture he cannot expect anything already paid to be returned. If the initiative was taken by the wife (or her community), then she must return what has been paid. Whatever the cause of rupture, however, the children always belong to the husband.

583 Finally, if the union is still in effect at the time of the
768 husband's death, the wife's community theoretically regains authority over her, provided that the bride price is paid back.

These three definite points show that lawful union, or
581 marriage, legally speaking, is essentially a kind of usufruct of the
626 woman to the advantage of the husband, and the price is the bride price. As a result, the woman's community is obliged to see to it that the husband enjoys his rights. Hence, when a wife misbehaves, no matter how, the husband reports it to her community which takes steps to bring the erring girl to terms for fear of having to refund the bride price. On the other hand, the husband is expected to treat his wife in a manner worthy of her, that is, with consideration for her origins, and if he fails to do so, he risks the consequences of breach of the marriage contract.

There are, therefore, reciprocal rights and duties required of the spouses. Based on the marriage contract, these rights and duties are reinforced, completed, or, more generally, influenced by ethics no less than by the feelings of the [207] couple in relation to each other and to their respective communities.

581 This is why a girl from a great house with high standing (1)
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1. Thus, in the western Sudan, the daughters of the Massa-si are treated with great deference.

cannot be treated like a common concubine, even though the husband may prefer the concubine to the wife, because the free daughter of a powerful house, richly dowered, is virtually independent in the household. If she is sufficiently well off, she may even live in a house of her own, and since her only obligation is the sexual conjugal duty, she receives her husband as she would a lover.

On the other hand the free woman of modest circumstances and, even more, of lowly birth is her husband's companion in wretchedness. She does all kinds of work, even the hardest and most disagreeable, and she desires no rupture that would deprive her of the only affection that sustains her, the love of her children.

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between Deni-ba Bo for the Massa-si of Kaarta and Suleyman Ba for the people of Fouta.

belonging to the other's community, at least virgins or women reputed to be such. This is because a first sexual contact is likely to result in some flow of blood, and brotherhood imposes a terrible punishment on anyone who sheds the blood of a blood-brother or one of his people. As is apparent, the obligation undertaken by the contracting parties holds for all their descendants, regardless of sex and in infinitum. Henceforth there is a very close solidarity between the two communities, who are so bound to mutual aid that, in practice, anything (including lies, slander, and perjury) is permissible to overcome a common enemy or, in any event, to help the ally in trouble.

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In place of the brotherhood oath, many other forms of oath can be used. Thus, the chronicles tell of Sounsan and Fa Siné forming an alliance with an oath which was undoubtedly binding, because the anvil on which it was sworn was afterwards cast into a well. Nko, Sounsan's god, received the oath under which the "young men" who were Massa's companions allied themselves to the latter's fate. At Ségou, the tondyon' likewise swore loyalty on the idols.

These sacramental agreements are endlessly varied, but they bind the parties only under the stipulated conditions, especially as regards the respective communities of the fa who take the oath.

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III. Marriage. There is no better way for a Bambara to show his attachment to someone whose alliance or friendship he desires than by giving him as a wife one of the girls of his own community and providing her with a generous dowry. This is one of the most solemn forms of alliance between communities (2).

2. People united by marriage are called furu-nyuan' (spouses) and hiran' (allies).

596 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
621 wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
583 in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

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2. Communities may be united under the protection of the same god. Here we shall study only their union under the protection of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

603 alliance]. (It is also customary for grandfathers and grandsons to eat together, while the sons eat apart.)

612 c. By Marriage: T'ɛ, K'ɛ, Kɛ = husband's name, corresponding
601 to muso (muso, term for spouse [female?]).

Bira nk'ɛ = father-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and all the male relatives of the husband or wife, corresponding to bira-muso = mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and all female relatives of the husband or wife.

587 When a man dies, his wives go to his younger brother; and if a man's wife dies, he may marry her younger sister . . .

582 This patrilineal and patrilocal family must have grafted itself
611 onto an ancient matrilineal system (see the chapter on inheritance and position of women). The systems of clan exogamy and endogamy are united: two pairs of brothers and sisters marry among themselves; sons must take their wives from their mother's family, and marriages take place between cross-cousins; children never belong to their parents' category, while grandchildren and grandparents always are in the same category.

583 [53] We shall see that alongside this matrimonial system in which wives are exchanged there exists a system in which payments are made to the fa of the young girl.

596 The size of the united family varies, but it may include more than 80 persons. Labouret (1) gives us, as an example, the composition

1. Op. cit.

of the blõ of Ngolo Traoré at Mpiéla, Kolokani subdivision:

	Men	Women	Children
1. Household of Ngolo	1	8	15
2. Household of Samba, Ngolo's brother	1	2	4
3. Household of Dotné, Samba's son	1	2	3
4. Household of Denkoro, son of deceased Bakoro	1	3	1
5. Household of Fabugai, Ngolo's son .	1	2	4
6. Quarters of unmarried males, all sons of Ngolo and Samba . . .	5		
	10	17	19 [sic]
		46	

621 631 The cluster of all these villages forms a kafo or kafu (canton) which includes the original family, its oldest neighbors, the inhabitants of other villages, and, finally, the outsiders. All these people acknowledge common interests, and the villages of the same canton send representatives to the assembly which meets at the chief's residence. Thus, the large family grows into a patriarchy to form the dugu (village) and spreads out into a kafu. Sometimes, after these branchings out, certain offshoot communities adopt a special dyamu and other taboos. The new dyamu is joined to the old, and little by little supplants it. The principal characteristics of the mother community exist, to which are added [55] various new traits, but the relationship between the two communities is never extinguished. Inversely, natives even of different races but having the same dyamu consider themselves related, which for them implies respect for the ancestral traditions concerning the cult, the practice of mutual aid, respect for the authority of the fa, who must protect all his relatives no matter how remote the connection, and fidelity to all pacts between the communities. Finally, between individuals of different races, certain dyamu, although dissimilar, are considered equivalent and may be interchanged.

621 b. Alliances. -- The unity of a community is founded not only upon common interests, which we will examine later, but also upon a whole system of alliances.

Monteil distinguishs four types of alliance: the common cult (see the chapter on religion), marriage, the tné, and the oath.

621 581 583 Marriage: this is the most common form of alliance. When a Bambara seeks an alliance with a family, he gives his daughter in marriage to one of the members of that family, after providing her with a large dowry. Some interesting information on this subject is furnished us by Monteil (1). The alliance between two families

1. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta. Les Empires du Mali [The Bambara of Ségou and Kaarta. The Mali Empires.]

is reinforced still further when they establish the custom of exchanging women. In this way the Soninké family Niakaté allied itself to the

621 581 583 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object. 621 784 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each 621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm 608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad [582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ- 621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal 608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following 648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which [783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

D. Position of Women

562 Women's society has remained much more impenetrable to European civilization. Women very rarely go to French schools, and unlike the men, who, during their military service and otherwise, are partly immersed in our system of civilization, they have few contacts with the Whites and appear to be even more attached to custom than their husbands. Very few speak French, and for all these [191] reasons their society has remained closed and very imperfectly known to the Whites.

562 Reasoning from what is known of their juridicial situation, we have deduced their inferior position. Perhaps a better knowledge of 858 their role and of their importance in the society will lead us to very different conclusions. From the legal point of view, a woman is always a minor; she belongs first to her own community, to which she owes obedience, then to her husband's community. When the marriage is legal, that is to say, when the husband has paid the matrimonial settlement, the children belong to the husband; if not, in the case of concubinage, the woman's family can claim the child, because it belongs to the family, as does everything of the mother's.

562 Her marriage is decided on by the fa; although in practice the woman is often consulted indirectly beforehand, and she has a 582 certain liberty in her choice. Even a slave can refuse to marry her 583 master, despite gifts and promises. But a woman is forbidden to marry someone she considers a relative, that is, someone who belongs to her paternal line and who bears the same name she does. Exogamy is the rule.

562 Yet, when a woman marries, she keeps her paternal name and her personal taboos; sometimes she adds her name to that of her son, 593 who normally bears the dyamu of his father. The woman remains very attached [75] to her family and goes to stay with them often. Among them she will find support in case of a difference of opinion [586] with her husband. In case of divorce through the fault of the husband, he loses all rights over the wife as well as the settlement he had paid.

595 In the system of polygamy, the first wife is mistress of the house; the other wives gather at her place for meals. She distributes [431] the husband's presents, but aside from these privileges, the rights of the wives are equal as are those of their children.

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer ...

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven [826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

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1. The sinsin, the gnéna of twins, is an exception, as it may also be bought.

inheritance, and rarely by purchase. The gnâ pass from father to son by inheritance, but it is always possible to obtain one by purchase; all that is necessary is to find in the village the number of people needed to make up the staff of the idol, provided one is not opposed by the sorcerer's veto.

Every purchase of a powerful boli occasions celebrations, festivals, and drinking bouts that last from three to eight days. These festivals are like marriage celebrations. Surrounded by his staff, the new fetish owner spends the day offering d'lo, or millet beer, to the many friends who come to congratulate him and give him their gifts. It is not until evening that he leaves his b'lon, or entry hut, and, followed by initiates carrying the idol, goes to the sacred grove or under the trees chosen to be the meeting place henceforth. The night is spent in dancing and shouting hymns.

In the eyes of the Negro to buy a gnâ is to become united with it in a firm and indissoluble way. It is equivalent to marrying the fetish, and they have no other phrase to express their idea, their notion of the matter: "A yé boli fourou, he got married"; "ayé boli fourou gosi, he has stamped and sealed his marriage with the boli" (2); "ne ka fourouboloma faro (3) flé, here is my wedding present";

● [583]

2. Fourou gosi: In order to enjoy the marriage lawfully, whoever marries must, in the presence of the head of the village, pay his wife's parents a handful of kola nuts -- usually eleven, one more than the required ten.

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3. Fourouboloma fara: This is the name of the small present of cowrie shells given to a

684 however, because the Negroes say that although the betrothed girl
836 does not belong entirely to herself, neither does she belong entirely to her fiancé; she still retains certain rights to her own person, "à ma di ban, she has not yet been given."

When a girl becomes pregnant, she is arraigned before the
684 family council. After a goat has been slaughtered for the family boli,
627 she is asked the name of her partner, and if she refuses to disclose it the council of the elders is called in. She has to yield, otherwise she is tied to one of the forked sticks that support the flat terrace roof, and blows rain thick on her back.

As soon as the guilty man is named, she swears on a powerful boli (1) that she has told the truth, and the man is summoned.

1. It is almost always a Komo, a Nama, or a Kono.

Nothing is to be gained by being a perjurer; it is better to pay the fine and live. The stain on his honor is slight, and he confesses without much shame: "Tigné (that is true); né no do (it is my fault)."

The fine is between 15 and 20 francs and often between 25 and 30 francs (2), not including the sacrifice to the boli, which con-

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2. The rule is that the culprit should pay the fiancé the entire bride price, or some 30 francs.

sists of two hens, two dogs, a goat, and two kola nuts. Quite often the injured fiancé has to be satisfied with the victims for the sacrifice and a small present, one to two kilos of salt, and 800 to 1,600 cowrie shells, or 1 to 2 francs. As for the child of an unmarried mother, its
847 fate is in the hands of the grandmothers, and of the father and the
848 mother, and it quite often happens that it does not cry twice in this
567 world; to use the Bambara expression: "N'a kasira, a t'na foula ké, if he has cried, he will not do it a second time." I am speaking here of a free girl, for the child of an unmarried slave girl is welcome; it is a gain for the house, and no attention is paid to the guilty man. This is easy to understand, for is there a Negro who does not abuse his slave?

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1. Newborn infants have their heads shaved six to eight days after birth; they cannot go out of their homes before being shorn of the hair of the womb (ou ba, "their mothers"; kono, "womb"; si, hair).

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mother provides some of hers. The dress-up outfit of our excised girls is a regular harness; two or three loincloths in layers encircle their waists, and of the actual costume, the band of cloth which shakes behind in limp and loose trains, the big pompom is all that shows. At least one can look at them and see them, as for once pretty white blouses clothe them; the long cloth slings required in the dances are thrown over their shoulders and brought to the front and create quite a pretty effect. In Bani country the girls wear a wide belt of cowrie shells around the hips and over the loincloths, and on each side two bundles of cowrie shells hang from leather thongs that pass over the shoulders and are crossed on the chest. This dousou ko (2), as it is

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2. Dousou, "soul," "heart," "seat of love"; ko, "affair," "pledge of love."

called, is the remaining portion of the bride price given by the fiancé, and is worth 5,000 to 6,000 cowrie shells.

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Around the drums that rage in the square, behind the old women who scrape their pieces of scrap iron, and behind the female story-tellers /griottes/ who sing of their charms, their strength and their beauty, the circumcised boys and excised girls circle for a few moments and go and sit on the mats that have been prepared for them.

Kola nuts are distributed to the new citizens; gourds of dégé, millet flour mixed with honey water and milk, are placed at the feet of the girls, queens of the day, and the head of the village makes the speech that is required at the beginning of every festival. His herald, standing beside him, repeats it word by word, sentence by

3. The Betrothal

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583 I have often heard it said that a Bambara marriage is nothing less than a sale and a purchase: the woman goes to the highest bidder. I cannot share such an opinion. The suitor gives a bride price, I know, but this bride price is a present to the fiancée, and its entire value is returned to him. When the fiancée's father receives it, he treats himself to trousers, a cap with three points, a new blouse, a few jugs of d'lo, or millet beer, and many kola nuts; but when the wedding comes, it is the father who provides his child with loincloths, gourds, pottery, in fact her whole trousseau, and however slight his vanity -- and what Bambara is not vain! -- he will spend the bride price and even more.

When the suitor has been able to gather two to three kilograms of salt, a few bits of cloth for the little girl and her mother, and a portion of the bride price (1), which varies between 25 and 30 francs,

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1. The bride price is set at ba mougan ni tan, about 24, 000 cowrie shells. Each ba equals 10 kémé. The kémé is worth 80 cowrie shells, the ba 800 cowrie shells. In ordinary times a 5-franc piece is exchanged for ba dourou ni kémé dourou, or 4, 400 cowrie shells. The value of the cowries is subject to rise and fall, so that the 5-franc piece is sometimes worth 4, 400 cowrie shells; at other times the cowries drop and the 5-franc piece is worth ba woro ni kémé dourou, or 6 ba and 5 kémé, or ba wolonoula, 7 ba.

he pays his respects to the family through his intermediary, the fouroubolomo tigi, or guardian of the wedding gifts. The latter goes to the father-in-law, escorted /204/ by a few young girls who carry the fouroufen, or bride price, the gifts of cloth and salt, and a few jugs

583 of d'lo, or millet beer. The head of the village and his council,
584 friends, and the to-n-déou, or members of the association of the
fla-n-to (1), go at once to pay their respects to the happy father and

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1. The association of the fla-n-to, with a to-n-tigi at its head, is made up of several groups of to-n-déou, or members of the association. Every group corresponds to a circumcision. /sic/ When many are circumcised at the same time, they form a group, but if there are only one, two, or three, they join the group of those circumcised at the preceding occasion. The to-n-dé invites to his betrothal and his wedding the members of his group, who were circumcised with him, and the members of the older groups. As to the younger groups, he does not invite them. The women also form an association of fla-n-to similar to that of the men but separate from it. The woman who is at the head of the association, usually the oldest in the village, is called to-n-tigi, or massa fama, queen, and the to-n-dé mouso (the to-n-dé women) call her m'ba, mother. They are summoned only to the wedding.

583 to tell the girl that her betrothal is being celebrated and cannot hence-
584 forth be broken without a grave and important reason. Soon the b'lon of /sic/ the entry hut and the inner court are full of crouching men who drink d'lo, or millet beer, and soon ramble in their talk. And

583 the fiancée has time to reflect and to open her heart to love, for her
584 wedding will not take place until one, two, or often three years after excision; once this has been performed she will be qualified to be a mother.

584 From the time of the engagement the two families draw together,
594 establish friendly relations, and visit each other. After the girl has grown up, during the year or two that elapse between the excision and the wedding, she spends two weeks to a month each year with her parents-in-law. One might say that in Bani country, this is the general custom (2). When the young men sent to bring her arrives,

> 2. In the environs of Ségou this custom is less comon. Often the two families come to an agreement, and on the appointed day the fiancée goes to the home of her fiancé, accompanied by a young man appointed by the council of elders. After the last festival of the circumcision (baloko déou don bo, "the coming out of the circumcised"), some, even many villages hold a festival for the fiancée. She goes to the home of her fiancé all loaded with beads and necklaces and escorted by all the young girls of the village. The fiancé bears all the cost of this festival, called mousodjira, "to show the wife." All the youths of the village and of neighboring villages give 80 to 160 cowrie shells to help the fiancé cover the expenses.

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she /205/ hides in the hut of friends, and the little band runs right and left looking for her. They soon find her, members of her family--

of her father-in-law nor linger with him in endless conversations, especially when no witnesses are present, and the fiancé is subject to the same rules with regard to his mother-in-law. /206/

In a word, they may no longer even look at each other! If the fiancé dies before the wedding, it is in good taste for the girl to become the fiancée of a younger brother, but if there is no brother she regains her liberty and keeps her bride price. If the fiancée dies, the family usually keeps the bride price they have received; custom permits the fiancé to demand the return of half the bride price but, in the eyes of everyone, to do so would indicate a lack of tact and delicacy. But if for one reason or another the engagement is broken, the bride price and small presents are returned to the fiancé in their entirety.

4. The Wedding of a Young Bambara Girl

The fiancé asks for the girl (1). -- The fourou fen (the bride price and small presents) have been paid, the fiancée is a grown young lady who has long been excised, and only rags remain of the beautiful yellow loincloth with black stripes which was received at the da woro, or festival that follows the sixth day after the circumcision. A kouara -- she has reached her full development and henceforth can only decline in grace and beauty, and her fiancé desires her. The

1. It happens sometimes that the family cannot refuse the suitor's request for the girl, although she does not have all her trousseau. In that case the wedding festival is put off, but she is led to her husband, and a little private celebration takes place on that day. When she has her trousseau she goes back to her family, and the big festival is held.